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*The Ohio River: a Course of Empire.* By ARCHER BUTLER HULBERT. (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1906. Pp. xiv, 378.)

THE fresh appreciation of the geographical relationships of American history which has been in evidence in recent years has had the inevitable result of accentuating an important type of our current historical literature. The memory of man runneth not back to the day when we have not been deluged with local and regional histories, and yet it must be said that, for reasons which are more or less obvious, it is just this sort of historical writing which has fallen farthest short of its possibilities in this country. Happily there are at present not a few reasons for believing that we are on the eve of a distinct advance in this particular, marked not by a mere multiplying of books but by more intensive study of social and economic backgrounds in individual localities combined with (and that is the vital thing) a broader sweep and a firmer grasp on the conditions and developments of the country and of the world at large. We have yet hardly got beyond the age of the "popular" local history, but the species is improving and, whatever results we may sometime attain in the way of critical local studies, we shall never reach the point, as indeed we ought not, where a really good popular history is not worth while.

A book of this kind is Professor Hulbert's *The Ohio River*, published recently in the Messrs. Putnam's interesting series on the great river-basins of North America. Professor Hulbert's studies of the geographical background of early Western history, particularly the "Historic Highways", are well known and have equipped him, if not for adding new information, at least for the retelling of old facts from a somewhat novel point of view and with a very desirable freshness and vigor. The task undertaken in the present volume has been to describe the Ohio River as an avenue of national expansion—as a "course of empire"—and to sketch with some fullness the peopling of the great area to which the river and its tributaries for many decades afforded the readiest means of access. The project involved the rehearsal of a large amount of familiar history, but it also gave opportunity for the emphasizing of some things not so well known and the correcting of a number of erroneous impressions which still linger with regard to the settlement of the Middle West. By far the most valuable portions of the book are those which deal with the distinctly human side of the subject—the conditions of pioneer existence with which the emigrant had to wrestle, the life of flatboatman and trader, the reign of outlaw and rowdy, the intermingling of racial elements, and particularly the jealous contact of Yankee and Virginian on the north and south banks of the river. So far as political history is concerned, the student will find nothing new. But there is a sufficient contribution to our knowledge of the physical and social elements in the subject to give the book at least a reasonable right to existence.

Nowhere, except perhaps in the author's *Waterways of Westward Expansion* in the Historic Highways series, will one find so full and satisfactory treatment of the conditions and means of navigation on the Ohio from the eighteenth century to the present, covering the age of the canoe, of the flatboat, of the steamboat, and of the steel barge, and not neglecting the activities of the government since 1825 for the improvement of the river's channel. Particularly interesting is the account of the brig and schooner building in the period 1800-1809, when Ohio valley promoters were for the time bent upon the romantic project of establishing direct commercial intercourse with the West Indies and Europe.

The book is unfortunately subject to the limitations and defects of a hasty and somewhat scrappy narrative. It abounds in lengthy quotations, of which those coming from early writers and first-hand observers are clearly apropos, while the utility of those from Roosevelt, Venable, and other recent authors is at least open to question. There is a tendency at times to state things rather more broadly than the authenticated facts warrant. For example, is it not a little too much to say that "There is no question but that the brave La Salle discovered La Belle Rivière of New France (the Allegheny and Ohio) about 1670" (p. 18)? The probability of the discovery is strong, but after all it is only a probability. And does not the statement that "Throughout the first half of the eighteenth century there was continual fighting between the French on the St. Lawrence and the colonists in New England" (p. 19) convey an erroneous impression?

The work is richly illustrated and for the most part with very desirable effect. But one cannot refrain from expressing regret that the process of "padding" which, we may presume, is more or less inevitable in a book of the kind, should have been carried so far as to obtrude cuts of the Carnegie Institute and the Phipps Conservatory into a really solid description of Pittsburgh a hundred years ago, and of the Louisville waterworks into a chapter on "Where Yankee and Virginian Met."

FREDERIC AUSTIN OGG.

*Correspondence of William Pitt when Secretary of State with Colonial Governors and Military and Naval Commanders in America.* Edited under the auspices of The National Society of the Colonial Dames of America by GERTRUDE SELWYN KIMBALL. (New York: The Macmillan Company; London: Macmillan and Company, Ltd. 1906. Two vols., pp. lxix, 445; xxiii, 502.)

It is perhaps singular that a century and a half should have elapsed before the student had access, in convenient form, to the correspondence of the "Great Commoner", the man who at a critical moment became the head and heart of England in arms. And it is almost a matter of reproach to the sterner sex that the editing of documents